(b) the number of fair price shops for distribution of foodgrains to these beneficiaries; and

(c) the procedure adopted by Government to monitor the Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) details received from the Government of Jharkhand for March, 2007, total 5,5,484 families have been issued APL ration cards and 23,94,000 families have been issued BPL ration cards. Out of 23,94,000 BPL families, 7,26,800 families have been covered under AAY.

(b) The number of fair price shops in Jharkhand State is 14,406.

(c) Identification of eligible families under TPDS, issuing of ration cards, distribution of foodgrains through FPS and monitoring are done by the State Government. Government of India gets reports from State Governments on implementation of TPDS and reviews the status in meetings from time to time.

The Jharkhand State Government has directed its all Deputy Commissioners to keep strict vigilance and monitor the functioning of the fair price shops through regular inspection of the shops to ensure proper distribution of foodgrains to the beneficiaries.

Sugar production

3240. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country is expecting to witness a bumper production of sugar, over 250 lakh tonnes in 2006-07 season;

(b) whether, after meeting domestic demand of about 190 lakh tonnes, Government propose to give any incentives to poor farmers and sugar producers as well as export subsidy to sugar mills;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to create a buffer stock of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar for the Price Sensitive Communities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In order to ensure that over production of sugar does not lead to a situation of mounting cane price arrears, the Central Government on 24th March, 2007 have decided as under:—

(i) to provide export, assistance to defray the internal transport and freight charges, marketing and handling charges at the flat rate of Rs. 1350 per ton on export of domestically manufactured suger from sugar factories situated in the coastal States and at the flat rate of Rs. 1450 per ton from sugar factories situated in other than coastal States. Exports made under Open General License (OGL) only (and not under 'advance license') on or after 19th April, 2007 and upto 18th April, 2008 or till further orders, whichever is earlier, would be eligible for this assistance. The estimated cost of the export assistance is Rs. 205 crores. The amount so received is to be used for cane price payment.

(ii) to create a buffer stock of 20 lac tons for a period of one year (01-05-2007 to 30-04-2008) under which interest charges, insurance and storage charges for the quantity taken as buffer will be reimbursed to sugar factories. The cost of this subsidy is estimated to be about Rs. 378 crores for one year. Further, banks would provide additional credit of about Rs. 420 crores on creation of 20 lac tons of buffer. Thus, about Rs. 798 crores would be available with sugar factories to pay cane price to sugarcane farmers, for the sugar season 2006-07 including the cane price arrears of previous sugar seasons. The buffer subsidy and the additional credit are to be used exclusively for the payment of cane price.

Wheat procurement by FCI

†3241. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the target of purchasing wheat fixed by the Food Corporation of India during the current year;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.